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## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM PROGRAM ASSESSMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

Each year, independent external experts review approximately one-third of NSF's programs. In FY 1999, NSF's activities were organized into nearly 200 programs. Approximately 40% of NSF's program activities were evaluated in FY 1999 by external committees such as committees of visitors (COVs) and advisory committees (ACs). In addition to the reviews and assessments by COVs and ACs, further evaluations of programs are carried out by independent contractors to address issues specific to those programs.

In FY 1999, a total of 18 committees of visitors (COVs) met to conduct reviews of 82 programs, producing a total of 43 COV reports assessing the quality of program performance and outcome results. The number of COV reports is greater than the number of COVs because the COVs were organized into subgroups to produce reports covering more than one program. Eight advisory committees met in early FY 2000 to review the work of the COVs and provide additional assessment.

The COVs assess the programs for integrity and efficiency of process and management; quality of science; quality of outputs and outcomes; and implementation and use of merit review criteria, covering a three-year period. This assessment specifically addresses the performance of NSF programs with respect to the outcome goals, the Government-wide goal on the balance of innovative, risky, and interdisciplinary research; and on the NSF goal relevant to the implementation of the new merit review criteria. The program assessments reported by COVs are reviewed and approved by external advisory committees.

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Table 1 summarizes the program assessments and evaluations that were completed in FY 1999 in addition to the assessments carried out by the COVs and the advisory committees. The National Science Board also commissioned a study by the Fleet Review Committee, to report to NSF on the Academic Research Fleet. The committee was asked to review and evaluate the current and projected research vessel fleet within a national framework, to review the overall management structure and existing capabilities, and review possible changes to ensure optimal operations.

**Program Assessments and Evaluations  
Completed in FY 1999  
Table 1**

Program	Scope	Methodology	Goals Addressed
Graduate Research Fellowships Program (GRF)	Determine program effectiveness and participant academic and professional achievement.	External review by independent contractor	<b>Goal 3</b>
Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER)	Determine use of funds by recipients; document recipients' histories and outcomes; determine value of award within department; determine NSF's effectiveness in implementing and managing the program.	External review by independent contractor	<b>Goal 3</b>
Presidential Faculty Fellows Program (PFF)	Determine utility of data from PFF web sites and annual reports.	External review by independent contractor	<b>Goal 3</b>
Instructional Materials Development Program (IMD)	Determine quality and use of IMD products in classrooms	External review by independent contractor	<b>Goal 4</b>
Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR)	Determine whether participants increased their share of federal academic research funds from 1980-1994; Identify program strategies responsible for improving participant competitiveness.	External review by independent contractor	<b>Goals 1-4</b>